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May 6, 2014

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**Council Delegates participate in signing ceremony
for the Navajo Nation's Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan**



Photo: From left, Capital Improvement Office manager Casey Begay, Honorable Jonathan Hale, Honorable Jonathan Nez, Speaker Pro Tem LoRenzo Bates, President Ben Shelly (sitting), Division of Community Development director Leonard Chee, Honorable Katherine Benally, and Honorable George Apachito.

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, Speaker Pro Tem LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) and Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) were among several delegates in attendance as Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed into law Council Resolution CAP-18-14, the Navajo Nation Chapters' Infrastructure Improvement Priority Projects listing, for Fiscal Years 2013 through 2018.

The Capital Improvement Plan required coordination from nearly all of the Nation's 110 chapters to gather data and chapter resolutions over the course of several years and is viewed as a monumental achievement by many delegates and President Shelly.

Delegate Benally, who served as the primary sponsor of the legislation which was passed by Council on April 22, thanked her fellow Council colleagues for approving the capital improvement

project listing and also expressed appreciation for past leaders, including former Navajo Nation Chairman and President Peterson Zah, for laying the foundation years ago.

Although the five-year CIP is now in place, Delegate Benally said the next major step is to secure funding to begin construction of the projects.

Pro Tem Bates called the initiative a “new beginning” for the Navajo Nation, adding that the Council will soon revisit possible funding sources.

“As early as this week we will sit down and begin looking at the alternatives that we as a Nation have in funding these projects,” said Pro Tem Bates. “Hopefully, as early as the summer session, we’ll have something to bring to the Navajo Nation Council to consider funding these projects.”

The priority listing was developed over the course of several years by the Navajo Nation’s Capital Improvement Office and includes numerous projects such as, government buildings, chapter houses, senior citizen centers, waste and water systems, parking lots, and judicial facilities.

Also in attendance was Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin), who thanked chapter officials for their contributions in developing and submitting project proposals and said the construction of the projects will improve the Nation’s economy and also create much needed jobs for Navajo people.

“With the President’s signature, we honor the collective hard work by many who contributed to the five-year plan, in particular, our chapter officials and staff from across Navajo land,” Delegate Nez stated. “I just want you all to know that you are greatly appreciated and your hard work is not going unnoticed.”

Co-sponsor of the legislation Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels), said the signing of the resolution signified the culmination of years of hard work between delegates and chapter officials.

“This is an effort that took cooperation from all sides to develop a plan that will lead our Nation on the path to a prosperous future for our Navajo people,” said Delegate Hale.

The occasion marked the first time a five-year CIP has been approved and signed into law.

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